

Appendix 3-I  
Fish and Wildlife Resource Information

## **UMC 783.20; Fish and Wildlife Resource Information Co-Op Mine Company Mining Projects**

### **General Wildlife Resource Information-All Species of Vertebrate Wildlife**

The main plan area encompasses a portion of the Wasatch Plateau in Emery County, Utah. This area drains into the Huntington Creek and into the San Rafael River, which flows into the Green River and ultimately into the Colorado River at a point upstream from Lake Powell. Generally speaking, the Wasatch Plateau is encompassed by cold desert (Canadian, Hudsonian and Alpine life zones), submontane (Transition life zone) and mountain (Canadian, Hudsonian and Alpine life zones) ecological associations. These life zones could be inhabited on occasion and during different seasons of the year by about 364 species of vertebrate wildlife—14 fish species, 6 amphibian species, 18 reptile species, 242 bird species and 84 mammal species. It is interesting to note that 83 percent of these species are protected.

The mine plan area itself is represented by the Transition and Canadian life zones and provides habitat for approximately 239 species of wildlife—5 fish species, 6 amphibian species, 17 reptile species, 136 bird species, and 75 mammal species. Fifty-eight percent of these are of high interest to the State of Utah.

The division Publication No. 78-16 “Species List of Vertebrate Wildlife that Inhabit Southeastern Utah” identifies those species having potential to inhabit the region as well as those inhabiting the environs of the mine plan area. It also identifies which species are considered to be of high interest for the habitats and local area represented.

High interest wildlife are defined as all famous species; any economically important species; and any species of special aesthetic, scientific or educational significance. This definition would include all federally listed, threatened and endangered species of wildlife.

A ranking and display of wildlife habitats and use areas relative to high interest species of vertebrate wildlife has been developed (Table 1 and 2<sup>3</sup>). Critical wildlife use areas followed in respective importance by high-priority, substantial value and limited value wildlife use areas require various levels of protection from man's activities and developments. Wildlife habitats and use areas ranked as being of critical or high-priority value to wildlife should be protected from surface disturbance, subsidence impacts and human or industrial disturbance. This can be accomplished through development and implementation of a wildlife plan.

Critical wildlife use areas are "sensitive use areas" necessary to sustain the existence and perpetuation of one or more species of wildlife during crucial periods in their life cycles. These areas are restricted in area and lie within high-priority wildlife use areas. All stream sections, reservoirs, lakes and ponds identified by Utah Division of Wildlife Resources as Class 1 or 2 are classified as being critical. Biological intricacies dictate that significant disturbances cannot be tolerated by the members of an ecological assemblage on critical sites. Professional opinion is that disturbance to critical use areas or habitats will result in irreversible changes in species composition and/or biological productivity of an area.

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<sup>3</sup> Tables referenced in this Appendix can be found in Appendix 3-K

High-priority wildlife use areas are “intensive use areas” for one or more species of wildlife. “Intensive use areas” are not restricted in area and in conjunction with limited value use areas form the substantial value distribution for a wildlife species. All stream sections, reservoirs, lakes and ponds identified by Utah Division of Wildlife Resources as Class 3 are classified as being of high-priority. In addition, wildlife use areas where surface disturbance or underground activities may result in subsidence that could interrupt underground aquifers and result in a potential for local loss of ground water and decrease flows in seeps and springs should be considered as being of high-priority to wildlife.

Substantial value wildlife use areas are “existence areas” for one or more species of wildlife. “Existence areas” represent a herd or population distribution and are formed by the merging of high-priority and limited value wildlife use areas for a species. All stream sections, reservoirs, lakes and ponds identified by Utah Division Resources as Class 4 are classified as being of substantial value.

## **Mapping**

### **Vegetation and Wildlife Habitats**

It is recommended that the Company's primary effort be placed on identifying species of vegetation in each wildlife habitat within the various wildlife use areas for purposes of reclamation. The Division does not have site specific information relative to vegetation types at the mine plan area. However, there are nine wildlife habitats present—riparian or wetland types, cliffs and tallus, sagebrush, pinion-juniper forest, shrubland, aspen forest, ponderosa forest, parkland and spruce-fir forest. The Company should identify each of these habitat associations on appropriately scaled maps.

It is believed that if satisfactory reclamation is achieved and man's disturbance does not continue or become a factor, that most species of wildlife displaced from the mine plan area will return. Without doubt, the key to success for enhancing or restoring wild lands will be development of habitats so that the post-mining condition as compared to the premining condition will have similar species, frequency and distribution of permanent plants in each vegetative type this will allow for natural plant succession. Additionally, other habitat features that represent the various life requirements for local wildlife must be provided.

## **Wildlife Use Areas**

There are maps available for you to copy at our Southeastern Regional Office in Price, Utah, that display high value use areas for high interest fish species. Also displayed are known seeps, springs, wetlands, and riparian zones. All vertebrates species of high Interest wildlife and their distributions are discussed in the following narrative.

## **Water**

Due to demands of state and general coal mining regulations, the company will probably be required to identify and appropriately monitor all surface waters for potential impacts from subsidence. This information should be correlated with the wildlife use area information due to the value of water to wildlife.

## **Fish and Wildlife Inventory**

### **Aquatic Use Areas**

### **Macrophytes**

From a position of the aquatic wildlife resource it is believed that there is no practicality for information relative to macrophytes to be addressed by the mine permit application; such information is nor generally available.

## **Macroinvertebrates**

The result from studies of macroinvertebrates may be required for purposes of determining need for stream buffer zones (UCM 817.57) in stream sections supporting biological communities. Since historic impacts from this mine's operation have impacted Huntington Creek and Trail Creek data relative to macroinvertebrates as a pollution index or a forage base for fishes or other predators dependant upon the aquatic resource need be presented.

Note, impact avoidance procedures that would protect the integrity of the aquatic resource need to be included with the mine permit application. Of importance would be facility designs and operational plans that will preclude further impacts on both streams and identification of procedures that will be utilized to keep any form of coal sediments or other pollution from entering Trail Creek and Huntington Creek. Snow removal is a significant contribution of sediments to local riverain systems. Deposition of coal particles in the aquatic system could have a variety of negative impacts on invertebrate and fish population.

The result from long-term studies of macroinvertebrates in Huntington Creek and Trail Creel would be of value for the Company to demonstrate when impacts that resulted from accumulations of coal and other sediments in each creek have ceased. Other sediments have resulted from encroachment of the road upon Trail Creek. These accumulations of sediments will likely continue until coal particles cease to enter either creek and the encroachment problems elevated.

Studies relative to macroinvertebrates if desired or needed, must be conducted by a qualified, private consultant.

### **Fish—Species Occurrence and Use Areas**

Aquatic habitats associated with the mine plan area support three species of game and two species of no game fish; all of which are protected. Of these fish, four species have been determined to be of high interest to Utah (Appendix A and reference Division Publication NO. 78-16<sup>4</sup>).

The Yellowstone cutthroat trout is an introduced species. It annually spawns between early May and mid-July. Most populations are sustained through natural reproduction; hatching is usually completed by mid-July.

The rainbow trout is an exotic species. Within Utah there are several different strains of this species. Generally speaking they spawn from mid-March through June; hatching is normally completed by late June. It is important to note that natural reproduction by this species is almost non-existent, since it is managed as a stocked population. This management scheme has resulted since their catchability is higher than other trout and the life expectancy of hatchery fish is short.

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 3-K



The brown trout is an exotic species. It's spawning period begins as early as mid-October and is normally completed by late December; hatching of eggs begins in the spring and is usually completed by late May. Most populations are sustained through natural reproduction and supplemental planting of fingerling brown trout.

The spawning period represents a crucial period for maintenance of trout populations; spawning areas are ranked as being of critical value. Such areas are characterized by clean, gravel zones that are at least six inches deep. These zones must also be covered by a min of six inch deep water flowing at a velocity of not less than one foot per second. These physical parameters are necessary for optimum spawning success.

The mottled sculpin is a native species. It annually spawns in the spring between February and May. All of their populations are sustained through natural reproduction. The spawning period represents a crucial period for maintenance of sculpin population; spawning areas (nest) are ranked as being of critical value. Such areas for sculpin are characterized as a nest scooped out beneath a stone or other submerged object. Spawning areas must have clean, gravel or rubble zones. Both the adult fish attend and defend the nest. They are known to spawn in water temperatures ranging from 45 to 48 F.

The reach of Huntington Creek adjacent to the project area (stream section 3) is ranked as being of high-priority to Utah's cold water fishery management program and is a class 3 fishery. It supports natural reproduction of self-sustaining cutthroat and brown trout populations. Occasionally, fingerling transplants of both of these species supplement the population. The

majority of trout in this stream section are hatchery planted, catchable sized rainbow trout. Section 3 of Huntington Creek is also inhabited by mottled sculpin and mountain sucker.

Although there are not fish in Trail Creek, its flow of water is of great value for reproductive success of spawning trout in the lower reaches of Huntington Creek for which is it tributary water. Additionally, drift of macroinvertebrates from this stream represent an important contribution of forage to trout and other fishes in Huntington Creek.

If project operations are planned or develop that would later, destroy or discharge polluting effluents into any perennial waters, appropriate state and federal permits, a mitigation plan and results from high level studies of the salmon fishery resource, if any, would be required of the Company. Achievement of mitigation would demand detailed studies of stream velocity correlated to flow representatives of the stream channel profile, gradient, pool-riffle ratio, substrata types identifying percent representation of each type and surface water information required for SMC 778.16.

It is important to note that no species of fish having relative abundance so low as to have caused them to be federally listed as threatened or endangered inhabit the mine plan or adjacent area. The endangered humpback chub, bonytail chub and Colorado squawfish inhabit the Green and Colorado Rivers. Additionally, the humpback (razorback) suckers also inhabit those rivers; it is likely that this species will one day be federally listed as threatened. It is not believed that implementation and operation of the Company's project will impact any of these species.

## **Terrestrial Use Areas**

### **Wildlife Habitat Types**

Of the nine wildlife habitat types present on the mine plan area wetlands and riparian habitats are ranked as being of critical value to all wildlife. Such zones are normally associated with drainage bottoms (ephemeral or intermittent), or perennial streams (UMC 700.5), seeps and springs within the upper Sonoran, Transition and Canadian life zones. Cliffs and their associated tallus areas that lie within the upper Sonoran and Transition life zones are ranked as being of high-priority value to all wildlife. When compared to all other wildlife habitats the aforementioned situations are considered to represent unique habitat associations (Table 1).

Riparian and wetland areas are highly productive in terms of herbage produced and use by wildlife as compared to surrounding areas. Experience has shown that as much as 70 percent of a local wildlife population are dependent upon riparian zones. Cliffs and tallus are of special importance to many high interest wildlife. These unique habitat types must be identified in the permit application and protected due to their high value for all wildlife.

Quantitative (acreage) and qualitative (condition, successional stage and trend) data concerning the wildlife habitats in each ecological association should be included as part of the mine permit application. It is important to note that each legal section of land represented by the mine plan and adjacent areas has been ranked as to its value for the total wildlife resource. Section 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26 of Township 16 South Range 7 East have been ranked

as being of critical value to wildlife. These rankings were developed through wildlife species inhabiting each legal section of land (Table 2)

### **Amphibians—Species Occurrence and Use Areas**

Six species of amphibians, all of which are protected, are known to inhabit the biogeographic area in which the mine plan and adjacent areas are located. It is probable that all of these species inhabit the project area (reference the Division Publication No. 78-16). Only one species of the amphibians inhabiting the project area have been determined to be of high interest to the State of Utah (Appendix A).

The tiger salamander is a yearlong resident animal of the project area. The substantial value use area for the adult form is represented by the any moist underground site or any similar habitat such as inside rotten logs, cellars or animal burrows. Such sites can be found within any wildlife habitat extending from the cold desert (upper Sonoran life zone) through the submontane (Transition life zone) and into the mountain (Canadian life zone) ecological association. The larva form, often referred to as a mud puppy, is a filled animal that must remain in water within the above-described ecological associations. It is interesting to note that the larva may fail to transform into adult, even after their second season, and they can breed in the larva condition.

Once the larva is transformed into the adult form the animal is primarily terrestrial. Salamanders do migrate to water in the spring for breeding and may remain there during much of the summer. Such an intensive use area would be ranked as being of high-priority value to the

animal. In September the newly transformed animals leave the water to find suitable places to spend the winter.

The tiger salamander breeds from March through June and is sexually mature after one yr. The male deposits a small tent-shaped structure containing a myriad of sperm on the pool bottom. During courtship the female picks up this structure in her cloaca; then the eggs are fertilized internally before or just at the time they are laid. The eggs, singly or in small clusters, adhere to submerged vegetation; after 10 to 12 days they hatch. Obviously, a critical period for maintenance of the population is when breeding salamanders, eggs or their larva inhabit the water.

Post-embryonic development of a salamander's larval form progresses at a pace somewhat controlled by water temperatures; in some cold waters larva may not transform into an adult and drying up of a pool may hasten the process.

Migration to or from water usually occurs at night, during or just after a rainstorm. When inhabiting terrestrial sites the tiger salamander is most active at night, particularly on rainy nights, from March through September.

Larva, when small feed on aquatic invertebrates and become predacious to the point of cannibalism when they are larger. Food items for adults include insects, earthworms and occasionally small vertebrates.

No amphibians have relative abundances that are so low to have caused the animal to be federally listed as a threatened or endangered species.

### **Reptiles—Species Occurrence and Use Areas**

Eighteen species of reptiles, all of which are protected, are known to inhabit the biogeographic area in which the mine plan and adjacent areas are located. It is probable that seventeen of these species inhabit the project area (Reference the Division Publication No. 78-16). Only two species of the reptiles inhabiting the projected area have been determined to be of high interest to the State of Utah (Appendix A).

The Utah mile snake is a yearling resident animal of the project area. It's substantial value use area encompasses all wildlife habitats excluding from the upper Sonoran (cold desert life zone) through submontane (Transition life zone) and into the mountain (Canadian and possibly Hudsonian life zone) ecological associations. Although its use area spans a multitude of habitats, the animal is extremely secretive, mostly nocturnal and is often found inside or under rotten logs, stumps, boards, rocks or within other hiding places. At night they can be found in the open where they hunt for small rodents, lizards and other small snakes. Occasionally, the milk snake may take small birds or bird eggs.

The mile snake may live beyond twenty yr and it becomes sexually mature during its third spring season. After mating, which occurs during spring or early summer when they are leaving the den, female mile snakes produce clutches which average seven eggs. The eggs are

secreted in a moist warm environment and then abandoned; incubation lasts 65 to 85 days. The site where an individual snake has deposited its clutch of eggs is of critical value to maintenance of the species.

The Utah mountain king snake is a yearlong resident animal of the project area. Its substantial value use area encompasses all wildlife habitats extending from the submontane (Transition life zone) into the mountain (Canadian and possibly Hudsonian life zones) ecological association. Little is know concerning this animal except that it frequents areas of dense vegetation and that it is often found near water. Its life history and food habits parallel that described for the Utah milk snake.

The date snake dens, which are protected and of critical value to snake populations, have not been identified on or adjacent to the project area. It is important to note that inventory for such has not been attempted. If the Company at some later time discovers a den it should be reported to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. If a den(s) is currently known, its location must be included with the permit application.

No reptiles have relative abundance that are so low to have caused the animal to be federally listed as a threatened or endangered species.

## **Birds—Species Occurrence and Use Areas**

Two hundred forty-two species of birds, all of which are protected, are known to inhabit the biogeographic area in which the mine plan and adjacent areas are located. It is probable that one hundred thirty-six of these species inhabit the project area (Reference the Division Publication No. 78-16). Twenty-five species of the birds inhabiting the project area have been determined to be of high interest to the State of Utah (Appendix A).

Migratory birds protected by Executive Order # 13186 may inhabit the area. Research from the Utah Chapter of Partners in Flight shows that approximately 75% of these birds are dependent upon corridors of trees and shrubs that grow along our streams and rivers. Due to the lack of vegetation along both Bear Creek and the left fork of Fish Creek it is unlikely many of these species would use these areas. In contrast both the right fork of Fish Creek and Cedar Creek are well vegetated and could provide quality habitat for many species.

Ducks commonly known as water flow are not known to utilize the project area, but may on occasion or during different seasons of the year make limited use of the riparian area. All of these species are of high interest to the State of Utah. Generally speaking, the riparian and wetland habitats encompassed by the project and adjacent areas provided substantial valued habitats for waterfowl. Each species has different life requirements and makes various uses of the riparian and wetland habitats.

For those waterfowl that nest locally, the period March 15 through July 15 is ranked as being of crucial value to maintenance of the population. Following incubation, which dependent upon the species may vary between 20 and 28 days and extend up until mid-August, the riparian and wetland habitats represent a high-priority brooding area. Additionally, the wetland habitat (large open water areas or dense marshland, none of which exists on the project area) is of high-priority for seclusion and protection of adult waterfowl during their flightless period when they moult. Males may begin the moult in early June and both sexes and the young are capable of flight by mid-August.



The project and adjacent areas provides substantial valued habitat for a multitude of raptors—turkey vulture, bald and golden eagles, four species of falcons (prairies, American and arctic peregrine falcons and American Kestrel), five species of hawks (goshawk, sharp-shinned, Cooper's, red-tailed and Swainson's hawks) and seven species of owls (barn, screech, flammulated, great horned, pygmy, long-eared and saw-whet owls). Many of these species are of high federal interest pursuant to 43 CFR, 3461.1 (n-1). All of these species are of high interest to the State of Utah (Appendix A).

Realistically, nesting habitat does not exist on the project or adjacent areas for many of these species. However, if a species were to nest on or adjacent to the project area, it would have a specific crucial period during which the aerie would need protection from disturbance; this period of time lies between February 1 and August 15. Generally speaking, aeries represent a critical valued site and need protection from significant or continual disturbance within a one-half kilometer radius of the nest. This consideration need only be implemented during the period of time that the nest is occupied. Species specific protection stipulations for aeries are available from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The current level of data relative to site specific use of the area by raptors is unsatisfactory. Likely, there are aeries that have not been identified. Many of these species are highly sensitive to man's disturbances. Therefore, it is recommended that intensive surveys be initiated on the mine plan and adjacent areas for determination of locations for raptor aerie territories. Such data needs to be merged with information provided within this report.

Golden eagles are a common yearlong resident of the mine plan area. There are no known active aerie territories associated with the project. (Note, an aerie territory is utilized by one pair of eagles but may contain several nest sites.)

It is believed that aerie territories for eagles may exist on the project area. This belief is based upon the fact that suitable nesting habitat is widespread on the mine plan area and throughout the local area. It is important to note that regularity of golden eagle observation and the fact that their status is common has resulted in documentation of mostly opportunistic observations of aerie territories.

An active golden eagle nest site is extremely sensitive to disturbance within a one-half kilometer radius. This buffer zone is ranked as being of critical value to maintenance of the eagle population when the bird is actually utilizing the aerie; that period of time is normally between April 15 and June 15. The radius for a buffer zone may need to be increased to one kilometer if a disturbance were to originate from above and within direct line of sight to the eagle aerie.

The mine plan and adjacent areas have been ranked as being of subsistence value to golden eagles.

The northern bald eagle is a threatened winter resident (November 15 to March 15) of the local area. Only two currently (1990) known nesting sites are in Utah along the Colorado River.

There is no known historic evidence of the northern bald eagle nesting on the mine plan or adjacent areas.

The American peregrine falcon (relative abundance is endangered) and the prairie falcon (relative abundance in common) are yearlong residence of the mine plan adjacent areas. Each of these species utilizes cliff nesting sites. ~~To date there are no known aerie sites for cliff nesting falcons on the project area. However, suitable nesting habitat for the prairie falcon is widespread. Suitable nesting habitat for the American peregrine falcon cannot be found on the mine plan and adjacent areas. Since existing on the area by prairie falcons would not be unlikely, the project area has been ranked as being of substantial value to this cliff nesting falcon. However, the project area only is ranked as being of limited value to peregrine falcons.~~

For each falcon their aerie site while being utilized and a one-half kilometer radius would be ranked as being of critical value to maintenance of their populations. The falcon's period of use at the aerie site spans the spring and early summer period—prairie falcon, April 15 to June 30; peregrine falcon, March 1 to June 30.

The level of data relative to site specific use of the project area by cliff nesting falcons (not including the kestrel) is unsatisfactory and there could be aeries that have not been identified. Therefore, it is recommended that intensive surveys be initiated on the area for determination of locations for cliff falcon aerie sites.

The endangered arctic peregrine falcon is a winter resident (November 15 through March 15) of the local area. This species has not been observed to utilize the environs on or adjacent to the mine plan area, however, its occasional presence would not be unlikely. Therefore, the project area is ranked as being of limited value to this species.

The blue grouse is a yearlong resident of the project area. Adult birds prefer open stands of conifers. During winter the blue grouse feeds exclusively upon needles and buds of Douglas-fir and spruce trees. Thus, this wildlife habitat (spruce-fir forest) is ranked as being of critical value to over-winter survival of the population during the crucial period of December through February.

Blue grouse annually exhibit what has been termed a reverse vertical migration from the high elevation spruce-fir habitat to lower elevation sagebrush, pinion-juniper or shrubland habitats. This movement is caused by a need of the birds to feed on early developing vegetation. Such movement also facilitates successful breeding, nesting and brooding of their young. Then as the year progresses, they move to higher elevations.

The males are polygamous and will set up and defend territories for booming and breeding activities against other breeding males. Such territories are critical to maintenance of the population during the crucial period of mid-March through mid-June.

After breeding the female develops a nest site which is secreted on the ground; the nest is of critical value to maintenance of the blue grouse population. Upon hatching, which occurs in

late May and early June, the young accompanied by the hen immediately leave the nest. The young blue grouse while being brooded rely heavily on insects for their protein needs during the first several months of development. The adult bird also shifts its diet during this period to include a high protein of insects. Brooding areas are ranked as being of high-priority value to blue grouse. The crucial period extends from hatching into mid-August.

As summer progresses into the fall season the grouse consumes large quantities of berries.

The ruffed grouse is a yearlong resident of the project area. These grouse are usually found in the continuum of habitats extending from aspen to shrubland types. But, during winter they often roost in dense stands of conifers. Generally speaking ruffed grouse prefer habitats lying within 0.25 mile of a stream course; such areas are ranked as being of high-priority value to their population. During winter the ruffed grouse feeds exclusively upon staminate aspen buds. Thus, this wildlife habitat (aspen forest) is ranked as being of critical value to over-winter survival of the population during the crucial period of December through February. During the remainder of the yr their diet shifts to include a wide variety of plant and insect material.

Ruffed grouse do not exhibit any type of seasonal migration.

The males are polygamous and will set up and defend territories against other breeding males. The focal point for breeding activity is the drumming log; all such logs are ranked as

being of critical value to grouse since they represent sites of historical use. Such territories are critical to maintenance of the population during the crucial period of early March through May.

After breeding the female develops a nest site which is secreted on the ground and deep within an aspen grove; the nest is of critical value to maintenance of the ruffed grouse population. Upon hatching, which occurs in late May and early June, the young ruffed grouse while being brooded rely heavily in insects for their protein needs during the first several months of development. The adult bird also shifts its diet during this period to include a high proportion of insects. Brooding areas are ranked as being of high-priority value to ruffed grouse. The crucial period for brooding extends from hatching into mid-August.

The bad-tailed pigeon is a summer resident of the projected area. This bird is seldom observed to utilize the Wasatch Plateau, but when observed the species is only represented by a single bird, pairs or even less frequently a small flock. Since the band-tailed pigeon's use of the Wasatch Plateau is best described as "occasional," the environs associated with the project area only ranked as being of limited value to the bird. Nesting birds select their nest in trees within the spruce-fir wildlife habitat. Peak on-nest activity occurs in late July and early August.

Mourning doves normally inhabit the project and adjacent areas, which represents a substantial valued use area for these birds, between May 1 and September 15 each yr. They nest throughout most of this period and each pair produces two clutches. The pinion-juniper and riparian habitats are ranked as being of high- priority value for nesting. Locally, mourning doves

show two peaks in on-nest activity—early July and early August. Successful nesting activities and any water sources are critical to maintenance of the mourning dove population.

The yellow-billed cuckoo is a summer resident of the project area. This bird only nests in the riparian wildlife habitat, therefore, such areas are critical value to maintenance of this species. Little is known concerning the yellow-billed cuckoo. Its nest is represented by a frail, saucer shaped structure of twigs and is always placed in bush or tree.

The black swift is a summer resident of the Wasatch Plateau. The mountain ecological association represents the swift's substantial valued use area. Normally, the bird is associated with a small flock that represents a colony. Black swifts are usually observed soaring as pairs and they feed upon flying insects. A colony's nests are scattered along precipitous terrain where the nest is often secreted behind a waterfall. Such a moist habitat is not known to exist on the project area. Cliff and talus wildlife habitats are ranked as being of high-priority value to the black swift. There is evidence that pair bonds are long lasting and that a nest be utilized in successive yr.

The belted kingfisher is a yearlong resident of the project area. It is often found only along riverian systems and its substantial value use area extends from the cold desert through the submontane and into the mountain ecological associations. Therefore, the riparian wildlife habitat represents a high-priority valued use area for this bird. It feeds exclusively upon fish. The kingfisher's nest is always secreted within a borrow along stream banks, thus, dirt bank habitats along riparian areas are of critical value to this bird.

The pileated woodpecker is a species having high federal interest pursuant to 43 CFR 3461.1 (n-1). The spruce-fir and aspen wildlife habitats of the mountain ecological association represent this bird's substantial valued user area. It is important to note that the pileated woodpecker had never been documented to utilize the environs of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. In areas of the State where the bird is known to exist, it is a yearlong resident with a relative abundance considered to be rare.

The Williamson's sapsucker is another species having high federal interest pursuant to 43 CFR 3461.1 (n-1). Typically, the substantial valued use area for this species is the spruce-fir habitat of the Hudsonian life zone is the mountain ecological association. Therefore, the spruce-fir habitat of the Canadian life zone on the project site would only represent the substantial valued use area for the yellow-bellied sapsucker is a yearlong resident of the environs associated with the project area and it has been a relative abundance considered to be common. Where as the Williamson's sapsucker has never been documented to utilize the environs of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. In areas of the State where the Williamson's sapsucker is known to exist, it is a summer resident with a relative abundance considered to be uncommon.

The Lewis woodpecker is also another species having high federal interest pursuant to 43 CFR 3461.1 (n-1). Its substantial valued use area is represented by riparian habitats characterized by cottonwood stands and ponderosa forests. These habitats do not exist on the project site. It is important to not that the Lewis woodpecker has never been documented to utilize the environs of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. In areas of the State



where the bird is known to exist, it is a summer resident or only a transient. Its relative abundance is unknown.

The purple martin is a summer resident known to inhabit the environs of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. In Utah its substantial valued use area is represented by open spruce-fir, aspen or ponderosa forest habitats of the mountain ecological association. The purple martin feeds on flying insects and may select its nest within any suitable above-ground cavity.

The western bluebird is an uncommon summer resident known to inhabit the environs of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. Whereas the mountain bluebird is a common yearlong resident of the area. Both birds are cavity nesting species. The western bluebird nests form the pinion-juniper habitat of the submontane ecological association up into the lower forest habitats within the Canadian life zone of the mountain ecological association. The mountain bluebird utilizes the same continuum of habitats for nesting, but also extends its nesting use across the Canadian and Hudsonian life zones and into the Alpine life zone. During winter both species spans a broad continuum of habitats. It is important to note that trees with cavities located on the project area can be of critical value to bluebirds.

Grace's warbler is a species having high federal interest pursuant to 43 CFR 3461.1(n-1). Its substantial valued use area is shrublands and associated ponderosa forest habitats of the submontane and mountain ecological associations. This bird's nest is built twenty or more ft above ground in a ponderosa tree. It is important to note that the Grace's warbler has never been

documented to utilize the environs of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. In areas of the State where it is known to exist, it is a summer resident with a relative abundance considered to be uncommon.

Scott's oriole is also a species having high federal interest pursuant to 43 CFR 3461.1 (n-1). Its substantial valued use areas are riparian habitats characterized by cotton wood stands and the continuum of habitats extending from the pinion-juniper forest into shrublands of the submontane ecological association. The oriole's nest is characterized as a grassy pouch and is hung in a tree. It is important to note that the Scott's oriole has never been documented to utilize the environs of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. In areas of the State where it is known to exist, it is a summer resident with a relative abundance considered to be uncommon.

### **Mammals—Species Occurrence and Use Areas**

Eighty-four species of mammals, of which 25 percent are protected, are known to inhabit the biogeographic area in which the project and adjacent areas are located. It is probable that seventy-five of these species inhabit the project area (Reference the Division Publication NO. 78-16). Twenty-six species of the mammals inhabiting the project area have been determined to be of high interest to the State of Utah (Appendix).

The red bat is a summer resident of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. The animal roosts in wooded areas (riparian woods and pinion-juniper forests) of the

submontane ecological association. Such areas represent this animals substantial valued use area. An occasional individual has been known to utilize caves; those individuals could hibernate and remain over winter.

The western big-eared bat is a yearlong resident of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. This animal roosts and hibernates within caves, mine tunnels or suitable buildings located in the pinion-juniper, shrubland and low elevated spruce-fir habitats of the submontane and mountain (Canadian life zone) ecological association. Such areas represent this bats substantial valued use area.

The snowshoes hare is a yearlong resident of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. Its relative abundance has been determined to be limited, since its substantial value use area is restricted to the spruce-fir and nearby aspen and riparian habitats of the mountain (Canadian and Hudsonian life zones) ecological association. Such areas are ranked as being of high priority value to the animal during its breeding season which spans the period between early April and mid-August.

The cottontail rabbit (mountain cottontail inhabits sites lying between 7,000 and 9,000 ft in elevation and the desert cottontail inhabits sites lower than 7,000 ft in elevation) is a yearlong resident of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. The entire project area represents a substantial valued use area for cottontails. Their young are born between April and July. This is a crucial period for maintenance of the cottontail population.

The northern flying squirrel is a yearlong resident of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. Currently, its relative abundance is unknown. Its substantial valued use area is restricted to spruce-fir or other mixed conifer habitats of the mountain (Canadian and Hudsonian life zones) ecological association. This specie is the only nocturnal squirrel in Utah. The flying squirrel may build its nest within an old woodpecker hole or it may build an outside nest of leaves, twigs and bark. Mating occurs twice each yr-February through March and June through July. After which, two to six young are born after a gestation period of 40 days-April through May and August through September. These periods are of crucial value to maintenance of their populations. During winter flying squirrels are gregarious; 20 or more have been known to den together.

Beavers are yearlong inhabitants of the biogeographic area that surround the project site. The substantial valued area is restricted to riparian and adjacent aspen habitats (those located within 100 metes of the riparian zone) in the cold desert, submontane and mountain (Canadian life zone) ecological associations. These animals construct a conical shaped lodge in which a family group lives throughout the yr. The lodge is of critical value to maintenance of the beaver population. One litter of kits is produced each yr; they are born between late April and early July after a gestation period of 128 days. Kits and yearlings coin habit the lodge with the adult pair. When they attain 2 yr of the age they are forced to leave; females can breed at 2.5 yr of age. Due to the animals dependency upon flowing water and the association riparian wildlife habitat is ranked as being of critical value to beaver populations.

The red fox is a yearlong inhabitant of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. The substantial valued use area for the red fox would include all wildlife habitats extending from the cold desert through the mountain (Canadian life zone) ecological associations. Almost nothing is known of their populations dynamics. Without doubt a crucial period for this species is when they are caring for young in the den. Dens while being inhabited are a critical use area. The gray wolf is a historic inhabitant of the biogeographic area.

The gray wolf is a historic inhabitant of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. Currently its relative abundance is so low that the animal is listed as endangered with extinction. The wolf's substantial valued use area would be represented by any remote habitat in any ecological association.

Black bears are inhabitants of the biogeographic areas that surround the project site. Their substantial valued use area is represented by all natural wildlife habitats (excluding the pasture and fields and urban or park types) extending from the submontane associations. These animals go into a semi-hibernation during winter. During this crucial period, which may last from December through March, the animal secrets itself in a den in order to conserve body energy reserves. The young are born in the den during January or February. Dens while being inhabited represent a critical valued use area for bears.

Many of the members of the family mustelidae are known to inhabit the biogeographic area biogeographic area that surround the project site. They are all protected and classified as furbearers-short-tailed and long-tailed weasels, mink, wolverine, marten, badger, striped and

furbearers, are also inhabitants of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project area that surrounds the project site. All of these species are of high interest due to their value in the fur market.

The substantial valued use area for short-tailed and long-tailed weasels, mink, muskrat and raccoons is the riparian habitat. Weasels, which are inhabitants of the project site, do make some use of other habitats that are proximal to riparian zones. Muskrats and raccoons are restricted to riparian habitats of the cold desert and submontane ecological association; thus, they are not found on the project area. The long-tailed weasel can be found from the cold desert up into the mountain (Canadian and Hudsonian life zones) ecological associations. The short-tailed weasel and mink populations extended their use from the submontane into the mountain ecological association. It is important to note that the weasel is restricted to the Canadian life zone; whereas the mink utilize the Canadian life zone; whereas the mink utilize the Canadian and Hudsonian life zones.

The substantial valued use area for badger and skunks span all wildlife habitats other than dense forest in the cold desert, submontane and mountain (Canadian life zone) ecological associations. Skunk show some affinity for habitats proximal to water. Skunk and badgers are dependent upon a suitable prey source.

The crucial period for maintenance of all furbearers, raccoons and muskrats populations is when they have young in a nest, den or lodge. Such sites are critical for reproductive success.

Bobcat, Canada lynx and cougar are known to inhabit the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. For all of these species a crucial period for maintenance of their population is when the female has her young secreted at a den site. Such sites are of critical value when being utilized. It is also crucial to their survival that a female accompanied by young not be killed or harassed.

The substantial valued use area for bobcats extends from the cold desert through the submontane and into the mountain (Canadian life zone) ecological associations. The bobcat is normally associated with precipitous terrain, but has been observed in every wildlife habitat within the aforementioned ecological associations. Their primary prey source is represented by small mammals and birds or any other small animal they can catch. It is important to note that bobcats occasionally do kill the young of the big game animals.

The substantial valued use area for the Canada lynx is restricted to the Canadian and Hudsonian life zones of the mountain ecological association. Normally, this cat would only be expected to utilize riparian and forested wildlife habitats. The lynx is similar in predation habits to the bobcat.

The substantial valued use area for the cougar (locally known as mountain lion) extends from the submontane into the mountain (Canadian and Hudsonian life zones) ecological association. Due to the dependency of the cougar upon mule deer as a prey source, a ranking of the lion's seasonal distribution parallels that of the deer.

Mule deer are inhabitants of the biogeographic area that surround the project site. Their substantial valued use area spans all wildlife habitats extending from the cold desert through the submontane and mountain ecological associations. In some situations deer show altitudinal migrations in response to winter conditions. There are, however, habitats where deer reside on a yearlong basis (see attached map).

Migration of mule deer from summer range to winter range is initiated during late October; probably, the annual disturbance of the fall hunting season coupled with changing weather reinforces the deer's urge to migrate and continued adverse weather keeps the deer on the winter range.

A portion of the project site represents winter range for mule deer herd Unit 34. Winter ranges for mule deer are all ranked as being of high-priority value to the animal; these areas are usually inhabited between November 1 and May 15 each yr. During winters with severe conditions the higher elevation portion of the winter range become unavailable to deer due to snow depth. Traditionally, some restricted portions of the winter range have shown concentrated use by the deer; these sites are ranked as being of critical value. It is important to note that all of the canyon bottoms associated with the project are of critical value to deer. Critical valued sites must be protected from man's disturbance when the deer are physically presented on the range.

Deer begin their migration back to summer range during mid-May and remain there throughout October. Summer ranges on the project area represent deer herd Unit 34. They are ranked as being of high-priority value to mule deer. In instances where extend of summer range



is the major limiting factor for deer herd, those summer ranges are ranked as being of critical value.

There are ranges that support mule deer on a yearlong basis. Most of these ranges are limited value to deer. However, there are some areas supporting yearlong use that are ranked as being of high-priority value to deer. There are no yearlong ranges for mule deer on the project site.

Mule deer fawn during the month of June. The continuum of wildlife habitats extend from the pinion-juniper through the shrubland and into the aspen types probably represents the fawning area. All riparian areas are of critical value for fawning and maintenance of the deer population. To date no specific areas showing annual use for fawning are known. It is probable that such areas exist; they would be ranked as being of critical value to deer. It is important to not that June represents a crucial period for maintenance of deer populations.

Agriculture areas that are bisected by the access route to the project area are utilized yearlong by mule deer. Their use is sometimes intensified during the winter and spring periods.

Moose area inhabitants of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. Their substantial valued use area spans all wildlife habitats in the mountain ecological association except those associated with the Alpine life zone. In some situations moose show altitudinal migrations in response to winter conditions. There are, however, habitats where moose reside on a yearling basis (see attached map).

Migration of moose from summer range to winter range is initiated during late November; probably, changing weather conditions is the initial stimulus. The onset of winter weather reinforces the moose's urge to migrate and continued adverse weather keeps the animal on the winter range.

A portion of the project site represents winter range for the Southeastern Utah moose herd – Huntington drainages. Winter ranges for moose that are characterized as riparian habitats are ranked as being of critical value, whereas the remainder of the winter ranges are ranked as being of high-priority value to the animal. Note that all riparian areas associated with the project have shown use by moose. Winter ranges are usually inhabited by moose between December 1 and May 15 each yr. During winters with severe conditions the higher elevation portion of the winter ranges becomes unavailable to moose due to snow depth. Critical valued sites must be protected from man's disturbance when the moose are physically present on the range.

Moose begin their migration back to summer range during mid-May and remain there throughout November. Summer ranges on the project area support animals from the Huntington drainages of the Southeastern Utah moose herd. Those summer ranges are ranked as being of high-priority value.

Ranges that support moose on a yearlong basis are ranked as being of critical value.

Moose calf during late May and June. Calving takes place in the riparian or adjacent forest habitats. Without doubt, all riparian areas are of critical value for calving and maintenance of the moose population. To date no specific area showing annual use for calving are known. It is probable that such areas exist; they would be ranked as being of critical value to moose. It is important to not that June represents a crucial period for maintenance of moose populations.

Rocky mountain elk are inhabitants of the biogeographic area that surrounds the project site. Their substantial valued use area spans all wildlife habitats extending from the submontane through the mountain ecological association. Elk do not have as strong of conditions, but they migrate to wintering areas (see attached map).

Migration of elk from summer range to winter range is initiated during late October; probably, the annual disturbance of the fall hunting seasons coupled with the changing weather conditions is the initial stimulus. The onset of winter weather keeps elk on the winter range.

A portion of the project site represent winter range for the Manti elk herd—Unit 12. Winter ranges for elk are all ranked as being of high-priority value to the animal; these areas are usually inhabited between November 1 and May 15 each yr. During winters with severe conditions some portions of the winter range becomes unavailable to elk due to snow depth. Traditionally, some restricted portions of the winter range have shown concentrated use by the elk; these sites are ranked as being of critical winter ranges for elk. Critical valued sites must be protected from man's disturbance when the elk are physically present on the range.

Elk begin their migration back to summer range during mid-May and remain there throughout October. Summer ranges on the project area support the Manti elk herd—Unit 12; they are ranked as being of high-priority value.

Elk calf during the month of June. Their preferred calving areas are best described as aspen forest with lush under story vegetation. All riparian areas on the summer range are of critical value for calving and maintenance of the elk population. To date no specific areas showing annual use for calving are known. It is probable that such areas exist; they would be ranked as being of critical value to elk. It is important to note that June represents a crucial period for maintenance of elk populations.

Currently, there are no other known high interest wildlife species or their habitat use areas on or adjacent to the project area. It is not unreasonable to suspect that in the future, some additional species of wildlife may become of high interest to the local area, Utah or the Nation. If such is the case, the required periodic updates of project permits and reclamation plans can be adjusted and appropriate recommendations made.